



## FSB Action and Success

### Taking Action

The FSB is working with central Government, MPs, local authorities, public bodies and banks to help small businesses tackle the recession.

- The FSB aims to influence Government policy on fighting recession by talking to politicians at all levels about a full range of business issues such as employment, regulation, taxation and finance. We submit parliamentary questions, table amendments to legislation, brief MPs, table Early Day Motions, secure Private Members' Bills on the plight of small businesses and hold parliamentary events
- FSB National Chairman John Wright attends meetings with Government ministers, banks and other business organisations at the Small Business Forum and Small Business Finance Forum to discuss bank lending and the environment for entrepreneurship
- The FSB is also represented on regional economic councils where local concerns are raised

### Local Government

- The FSB's Keep Trade Local campaign urges Government, local authorities and public bodies to help save small businesses from closures by taking action on public procurement, parking, planning, crime and business rates
- Local councils have also been encouraged to work with small firms by signing up to the FSB's Small Business Engagement Accord

### Access to Finance

- The FSB lobbied for a £1bn Enterprise Fund Guarantee in October 2008 – at the Pre-budget Report in November 2008 the Chancellor announced a £1.3bn **Enterprise Finance Guarantee** – which demonstrates the lobbying strength of the FSB
- The FSB has launched a financial helpline for its members to provide advice on support available to small businesses during the recession
- The FSB runs regular surveys of its members regarding access to finance and how businesses are coping in the economic climate. These statistics are often sent to key stakeholders such as the Bank of England and the Treasury to help inform their policymaking

### Employment

- The FSB has been actively campaigning to support employment in small businesses by encouraging apprenticeships and internships and calling for less tax to help employers take on staff
- The Prime Minister announced in his Party Conference speech that the Government would work with the FSB to create 5,000 graduate internships in small businesses. The scheme goes live in January



## **Key Success**

The FSB has secured several initiatives to help small businesses through the recession:

- **Party conferences 2009**

The FSB was mentioned in speeches and fringe events at the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat party conferences.

- **Internships**

The FSB is working with the Government on a subsidised internship scheme open to small businesses that are able to demonstrate that they have a meaningful project for an intern to undertake.

- **Regulation delays**

The Government has delayed the introduction of 26 business regulations to take account of the current economic climate. These include the Agency Workers Directive, right to request time to train and a ban on tobacco displays.

- **Post Bank**

The Government has launched a consultation on expanding the financial services role for the Post Office, following FSB calls to preserve the network and for the creation of a Post Bank.

- **Automatic Rate Relief**

The FSB secured a Private Members' Bill calling for rate relief to be applied automatically for small businesses. It was tabled in the House of Commons in March 2009 by Peter Luff MP and received backing from across the political spectrum. Automatic rate relief has since been introduced in Northern Ireland and we hope the Government will follow suit.

The Government has increased the thresholds for small business rate relief which could provide businesses with cheaper business rates. The relief applies to business premises with a rateable value of £25,499 in Greater London and £17,999 outside Greater London.

- **Enterprise Finance Guarantee**

The Government introduced a £1.3 billion Enterprise Finance Guarantee in January following pressure from the FSB to set up a new loan scheme to help small businesses struggling to access finance. Around £500m has been lent to 5,700 businesses so far. The guarantee has also been extended for new or increased overdrafts and invoice finance facilities to support an agreed additional advance on a debtor book.

- **Bank Switching**

The FSB gained a commitment from the banks to allow customers to switch accounts from one bank to another within five days.

- **European Investment Bank**

Several Regional Development Agencies and local authorities are now offering funds from the European Investment Bank following FSB proposals that the finance could be distributed through avenues other than the banks.

- **Prompt Payment**

Following pressure from the FSB, the Government has pledged that all departments will pay suppliers within 10 days and is working with public bodies to ensure they do the same. Business Secretary Lord Mandelson launched the Prompt Payment Code to urge large and small businesses in the private sector to pay their suppliers fairly and on time.